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1688

SOME CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE New TEST OF THE Church of *ENGLANDS* Loyalty: IN A LETTER From a COUNTRY GENTLEMAN;

Occasioned by the present Invasion.

SIR,

I Have great Obligations to you for the continual Accounts you send me, I have not Power, or if I had, I am not at leisure to express my Engagements. For to tell you truly, your late Accounts of our strange Revolutions, do so fill my Thoughts, that I am pausing upon them continually. Indeed you have all along represented Things as became that Important Station and Honourable Chara-

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fter you bore when the Crown was in danger the time before. But I must need say, that in these latter Relations you have so Instructed me, that I am at a perfect loss with my self whether you have been more Just or Kind: For, as indeed the Case requir'd, you have given me such a particular view of things, that if I liv'd in *London*, and had those compleat Freedoms which you enjoy with so many Men of Sense and Quality, yet I should never be able to form so exact an *Idea* of our Publick Affairs as I take from your Paper as it lies before me. I have also had the pleasure of Entertaining my Friends at your Expence, for so the Honesty and Ingenuity of your Letters requir'd I should. Besides, it was necessary to Inform my Neighbours, that we might find out by Consultation which were the best Methods to serve His Majesty, now His Necessity calls for our Help again, and His Wisdom does us the Honour to Command it.

You remember, Sir, (since you made us happy in your Conversation) what a considerable Neighbourhood we have, how Persons of Honour and Quality, Loyalty and Conformity, live thick about us, and what a powerful Influence they have upon the Common People, I leave this to your Reflection. But it was necessary I should put you in mind of it, in order to what I am going to say; for now I am coming to set down those Thoughts which caus'd you this trouble.

And yet before I can speak directly, I must observe the Seasonableness of these Considerations.

There is a time for every Purpose, said the Wise King *Solomon*, and 'tis made good in this particular; *for if that* be the time to consider and expose False Reasonings, *when our Adversaries are bound to take notice of what we say*, then this is the very time to Vindicate our selves from those Odious Slanders which have been outragiously thrown upon us. Particularly in *May* 1687. there came out a Scandalous Paper call'd, *A New Test of the Church of England's Loyalty*. The design of which Paper is to prove that our Ecclesiastical Constitution, as 'tis now Reform'd, was Hatch'd, Nourish'd, and Supported to this day by Disloyal and Treacherous Practices. I need not prove that this is the pretence of the Paper,

Paper, for we our selves remember it *sufficiently*, and the Author of it will not, I me sure, pretend that I *misrepresent* him.

If all the Instances he brought to prove his Accusation, had been true, it had yet been no Blemish to our Church at all.

'Tis an horrid practice of these Adversaries, and they have been as loudly told of their Reasonings against us, to the Damage, and if they could, to the Ruine of our Common Christianity. And such amongst many others, is this Method of Reasoning against Mens Practices in spight of their Principles. For what if some of our Members prove Disloyal, 'tis yet no more Reproach upon our Ecclesiastical Constitution, than the wicked Lives of Christians, if objected by a Turk, would be an Argument against the Divine Institution of our Blessed Lord himself?

Thus his Paper would have been good for nothing, if his Instances had been true; But how utterly False they are, his Judicious Answerers have plentifully shewn.

These Worthy Persons have done more than was necessary in exposing this Paper, for every common *Reader* discerned the Deceit of it, and therefore it is not my Intention to add any particular Reflections; Tho' if I wrote to gratifie any Pique, I could not forbear, there are so many lewd things in the Paper which have not been yet exposed. But my design is only to shew our unthinking Adversaries the plain Consequences of it, and how much Mischief this Paper, *and that which follow'd to Abett it*, NOW does the Royal Cause, till a Mark of Infamy be set upon them.

For in a word, the Dispute is not between him, and me, but between these Rascally Papers, and His most Sacred Majesty.

For the plain Relation of the Case is thus:

His Majesty upon His coming to the Crown, did Graciously (let me add) *and Gratefully acknowledge* our Loyalty: His Sacred Words are these: *I know the Principles of the Church of* England *are for Monarchy, and the Members of it have shewn themselves Good and Loyal Subjects.*

And again at the opening of the Parliament, *May* xxii. 1685. *What I said to my Privy Council at My first coming there,*

I am Desirous to Renew to You; wherein I Fully Declared My Opinion concerning the Principles of the Church of England, *whose Members have shewed themselves Eminently Loyal in the Worst of Times, in Defence of My Father, and Support of My Brother of Blessed Memory*: Here are Principles and Practices too. But this little Author on the contrary says, *We must Change our Old Principles of Loyalty.* This surely is bad enough to be said directly in the Face of our Royal Master; and if it were for this Reason only, methinks the Paper should not have *an Allowance* to the Printing.

Perhaps they will excuse themselves, by saying as they have done, that we have forfeited the Kings Protection, and so He may break His Word with us.

They have said so indeed, *to the Kings Damage*, but be sure our present Circumstances will convince them that 'tis false and then there will be no Remedy, but this Desperate Paper must be Stigmatiz'd, or else it will fly in the Kings Face, and deceive *Posterity* into an Opinion that He began His Reign with (what I abhor to mention) a Solemn and Deliberate Falshood in His Mouth. But there is yet another Scene of Mischiefs which will be sure follow, if this *Paper* be still protected.

We heard some Reports *or Amuzements rather*, about the *Dutch* preparations; but when you sent the *Kings Proclamation*, Dated the xxviii. of *September* last, we then thought seriously of things, and stood on Tiptoes, as it were, to see what was the matter, and what Measures would be taken.

When behold we found the King so far from believing that we had forfeited our Right to *His Promise* and *Protection*, or that we were Disloyal and Treacherous, as this *Pamphlet* slanders us, that He did not think Himself Safe till we again were made His Life-Gard.

I might alledge many things to prove what I now Assert, but I only alledge that Famous *Proclamation*, as Posterity will call it, Dated the xvii. of *October* last, by which *Proclamation* the King Intrusts again all His Corporations in the hands of the Church of *England*.

We thank the King abundantly for His goodness towards us: but 'tis not my present business to invent for handsome Expressions, for we are now considering *the Mighty Trust*,

and taking notice how it flatly contradicts this provoking pamphlet; so that a second time the matter comes to be debated, as it were, between this wicked Author, and our dread Sovereign.

But the King as he is gracious, so he has manifested himself to be Superlatively Tender to those of his own Perswasion; and so I shall insist no longer upon this mischief, least I wholly lose my labour; for I am dealing with Adversarys, who care not much for the Kings Honour, as they have shewn the World abundantly; and the King surely has too much Goodness, to insist upon it against them.

But now if the Members of this Communion should fail him! A man that loves his King and Country, does even shrink at the Supposition: But because there is no harm in the bare Supposal, we'll imagine that they may. I need not be told that we ought to do our Duty to the King, whatever Disappointments or Severities we meet with; *and by the Grace of God we resolve that we will.*

But yet these men should consider, that we are frail Men, and our passions may be provoked, till they master our Reason, and then indeed, tho' we shall be Guilty, yet neither will they be Innocent; *and be sure the Misery will be chiefly theirs.*

And now let's look upon those *High Provocations* they give us. 'Tis plain, if the King may be Judge from first to last, they are all unreasonable, and that is a most provoking Circumstance.

But I shall be so exceeding fair with our Adversaries, as to overlook a whole multitude of Exasperations, and Confine my self to this bold Paper; and this surely will oblige them, and so will have some good effect.

'Tis twice already within the compass of seven years, that we have hazarded our Lives and Fortunes in the service and defence of this very Prince, and by God's goodness have been successful too, and that is an Endearing Circumstance.

But now that we are called upon for further Assistances, we shall be apt to enquire what Returns have been made to our past Services?

I never mean from the King, but from the Papists, for they are the greatest gainers, and being our fellow Subjects, are be sure our Debtors. Why

Why if this question should be asked, and may be answered, it must be replyed, that by way of Recompence we are Reproached, as Disloyal and Treacherous, in a Paper that comes out *WITH ALLOWANCE*, and so is made into *a Record* against us, and shall *so far as they can effect it*, be an Evidence to Posterity, that ever since the Reformation, we are one continued Race of Villians.

Now this is a Carriage would amaze one beyond what any Exclamation or notes of Admiration can discribe: But as I direct my self to the Romanists, so I shall not attempt to move them by any Passion or Affection, or any thing less than the Kings and their own dear Interest.

We ought indeed to do our Duty, *thro' evil Report and good Report*, as the Apostle expresses it, *and by the grace of God we will.*

But yet we are a mixture, for like other Societies of Men, *the Tares and the Wheat grow up together.*

What a stupid folly therefore and desperate madness is it to jear us of our Loyalty, as in another Paper, *Printed Permissu Superiorum*, or to tempt and provoke us to be Disloyal, by slandering and reproaching of us upon Record for a Race of Traytors; notwithstanding all our eminent Services to the Crown?

I say, what stupid folly and desperate madness is it to use us thus, when if they could prevail upon us, they themselves must perish for their Pains!

But if our reasoning upon all that's past, proves ineffectual, yet NOW methinks when his Majesty wants and trusts too so much; NOW surely they ought to lay all the Engagements upon us, and give us all the Encouragements that ever they can, to obey the King, and defend them.

To say only that 'tis our Duty, and we are Bound to do it, is to say plainly that they knew nothing of humane Nature: And to give yet a further proof to the World, that they have no Skill at all in Politicks.

The Wisdom of our Prince has judged far otherwise, for he has Condescended to do, several Acts of Grace, *And to renew his Promises*, that so he might the more Engage and Encourage Us to Serve him.

So that they must again go contrary to the King's prudence

dence as well as against his Interest, if they do not make amends for the Injuries they have done us. This is so plainly reasonable, that suppose we agree thus far.

But here comes the Pinch of the business; what Injuries have they done us? And what Amends would we have them make us?

I have limited my self before to Consider only this *New Test*, and I will keep my method; and now that this is *an Injury with a witness*, is undeniable.

For unless the King was ignorant after so many years Experience of us, or unless he began his Reign with a deliberate falsehood in his Mouth. Or yet again, unless he is NOW so imprudent, *at least*, to repose his greatest Confidence in this eminent Danger, in the Hands of those whom he knows are false. My Reverence for the King, strikes me with a Sacred awe, whilst I do but set down these things, but yet they are all true, or else, this Paper is a *gross, lying, infamous Libel.*

And for the MISCHIEFS it does the Royal Cause, which is the next Consideration. Now,

If dangerous Temptations and outrageous Provocations to be Disloyal, be an Injury to the Kings Interest? Or again, if the King himself has done wisely in his late Condescensions and Acts of Grace, that so like God Almighty, he might allure us to do our Duty, and encourage us in it?

Why then like Satan, have they opposed the Kings Method, Discoraging and Hindering us all they can; And if still we will be Loyal, 'tis because they are not able to help it.

But then because we have so much Infirmity and Corruption about us, *'tis much to be feared*, that like those wicked Instruments, they will Slacken some, and Pervert others from their Duty: And thus you see the mischiefs of this wretched Paper, are only as great as the whole Cause it self is worth.

Perhaps you'll say I aggravate the matter too far upon a single private Paper; But then you don't Consider the *Allowance*, which makes it a publick Authentick Act, so far as concerns that Party, and so long as the Paper stands with this Mark of Publick esteem upon it, 'tis an open Declaration that they Account us Disloyal, and must use us as such whenever they can.

So that upon the whole, 'tis necessary to put a mark of Disgrace upon this Paper, and the very Refusing of it, *is to*

stand

ſtand by the Allowance, and call us Traytors ſtill in oppoſition to the King, and to all the Damage they can do him, by enforcing thoſe Hands to which he puts his greateſt hopes. Perhaps I may be aſked, Why I put Men in mind of this again? But this Supposes it had been forgotten, whereas I can aſſure them, Their *New Teſt Printed with Allowance*, is ſtill freſh in Memory, and I have not Revived it, as every body will Anſwer for me. But my honeſt Reaſon for this Paper at this time, is because that NOW is the Seaſon to make us Amends, for if they will not do it *Now* upon ſo reaſonable a Demand, they would be certain never have done it, and if they will do it Now, they could never have done it at *a better Time*.

I do not at all conſider whether this be a Clergy or a Lay *Allowance*; let us but have a Check againſt it by any publick Authority amongſt them, and that will be ſome ſatisfaction, for we ſhall thereby ſee their Wiſdom and true Zeal for the King together.

I have a long time wiſhed, that we might Try the Ingenuity of the Roman Catholicks in a Matter where their Religion is nothing concerned, and now here is an Opportunity put into their hands, and I hope they will uſe it well. They may Account this for a private Paper, but I can aſſure them, the Eyes of the Nation are *Now* fixed upon them, to ſee how they will behave themſelves, as in other Particulars ſo *in This*.

If I did not eſteem them as Men of underſtanding, I would ſuggeſt, how it could be no Diſgrace or Shame, but *an Honour and Reputation* to Retract or Diſown *this Paper* Publickly.

And now, dear Friends, I have ſaid what occurs to my thoughts upon this matter, and I did it becauſe truly I had a mind, that ſomething to the purpoſe ſhould be made Publick, and I thought it not reaſonable to deſire it of you, without giving ſome hints of my Deſign; I have now done when I have only added, that the whole is at your diſpoſal abſolutely, for I am, *&c.*

Juſt as this is coming away, we hear for certain that the Prince of *Orange* is Landed with a great Army, which Confirms the Deſign, and ſtrengthens the Reaſon of this Paper; For NOW *be ſure* his Majeſties Affairs do *very mightily* ſ r that PUBLICK SATISFACTION, which every Dutiful Son is BOUND to D manand, in behalf of his Holy Mother the Church of England; and if the Romaniſts will not give it us in ſuch a Neceſſity, they muſt be conſidered as the worſt Enemies the King has.

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